Start of [Kristallnacht Commemoration :

AR 11758

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November 2, 2008

KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION

3:00 Reception for Honorees

4:00 Concert
"All the Israels, All the Sarahs"

A newly commissioned work
Thomas Cabaniss, Composer
Richard Hamburger, Librettist

The Blue Card, Inc.
171 Madison Avenue, Rm 1405
New York, NY 10016
212-239-2251
Blue.Card@verizon.net

Welcome ..... Mimi Lieber, Board Member
Introductions ..... Michael Lissner, Chairman
Leora Kahn, President
Elie Rubinstein, Executive Director

BLUE CARD HONOREES:

Elizabeth Bergstein
Hella Hammelbacker
Frank Harris
Helen Kober
Max Liebmann
Erika Teutsch
Margit Ulrich

Special thanks to Sam Gold, Cellist

Elizabeth K. Bergstein

In 1938, I was a student in Vienna, where I was born. My father had passed away when I was very young, and it was just my mother and I. When Hitler stormed into Austria, it became very clear that there was no future here for us, and we almost immediately decided to leave. My mother had a brother in the US, who helped us with an affidavit. Things did not go as quickly as we had hoped, and the required papers did not arrive by the time we planned to leave, though we were able to get a visitor's visa which would enable us to wait in London until our papers for the U.S. came through.

We planned to leave Vienna on Sunday November 13th. On November 10th, the Nazi rampage began. We escaped out the back door of our apartment and made it to the train station. During the trip, Gestapo agents regularly checked our papers and after a harrowing trip we crossed the border into Belgium. It is now 70 years later, and in my mind I can still recall the feeling of relief when we arrived in Brussels. We found out afterwards that all later trains were held at the borders, and all Jewish travelers were removed.

Because of a mix up with our papers, we were stuck in England for almost two years, and we finally crossed the Atlantic and arrived in N.Y. in 1940 to start our new life.

My uncle provided an apartment for us in Hoboken, New Jersey. Through his connections I got a job as an intern in a real estate office, and then started my career in real estate, first as a secretary, and finally as a controller for a well known real estate firm. I ultimately formed my own real estate company and after 30 years in business I retired in 2006.

I married shortly after arriving in the US and I have one son who is now retired after a successful career in the computer field.

Helen Kober

I came to the United State in 1938 with my parents and instinctively felt that they had a hard time adjusting. One Sunday morning, our doorbell rang and a gentleman came with a Blue Card and asked us for a donation. My parents, though they had little money, contributed.

My family lost many close relatives in the Holocaust. There was a big void in our lives. In 1953, I married my husband, who was very much involved with The Blue Card. He used to take me along to the Chanukah Parties. There I met Dr. Alfred Moser and we became very good friends.

I was President of Leo Baeck, B'nai B'rith some years later which also had an Assistance Program. I collaborated with the Blue Card over the years, discussing various cases.

When Dr. Moser was ready to retire in 1970, he approached me to consider taking over as his successor. It was a gratifying position and I am happy to still be involved in this worthwhile cause.

Max K. Liebmann

I was born on September 3, 1921 in Mannheim, Germany. My father was in a business founded by his father - representing textile manufacturers, until he was forced to give it up in 1937.

In 1939 I was ordered to travel to East Germany for "harvesting" duty. We had to help the farmers and thus became the very first slave laborers. After 8 weeks, harvesting was completed. The group I was assigned to was permitted to return home at the end of November.

In October, 1940, along with 6,504 German Jews, I was deported to Camp de Gurs in Vichy France. I was there for 21 months and was lucky enough to be "transferred" to a forced residence in July, 1942, exactly one week before all Jews remaining in the Camp were deported to Auschwitz.

From there I went to Le Chambon s/Lignon, a Huguenot Village. Some villagers helped me to escape to Switzerland in Sept. 1942 and my girlfriend joined me in March, 1943. I was interned there until February 1948. We got married and in March, 1948 and arrived with our 2- year -old daughter in the United States.

I worked as an accountant for various manufacturers and retired as Vice President Operations for the NY division of Gibson Greeting cards in Brooklyn in 1987. Since1990 I have been working as a volunteer at the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and presently serve as Senior Vice President.

Hella Hammelbacher

Hella Hammelbacher was born in Nuremberg, Germany in 1914, and emigrated to the U.S. in 1939 with her (late) husband, Hans. Before she left Germany, she studied furniture and interior design, and continued her career in New York, creating packaging, logos and labels as art director for several printers. She has two sons, Ralph and Frank.

For more than 20 years, Hella has created the design and layout of the Blue Card Calendar, distributed each year to Blue Card friends and supporters.

Hans Hammelbacher was President of the Blue Card for many years and contributed the text of the Calendar. Son Ralph has continued the writing tradition. Hella is proud to be an honorary member of The Blue Card's Board of Directors.

Hella remembers: "On Kristallnacht, 1938, the man in the apartment below us was beaten up. The one above us was thrown down the stairs. We were fortunate - the group invading our apartment did not touch Hans - they left us with a basket of prayer books and some silver objects. We left Germany shortly thereafter."

Frank Harris

Frank was born in 1922. His father was a prosperous toy maker in Fuerth, Germany, who was arrested on Kristallnacht and sent to Dachau. Frank was not arrested due to his young age.

Frank's parents left Germany in 1939 while he went to Holland on the Children's Train and then eventually to England. Frank and his parents ended up in two different internment camps in England. The family was sponsored by an aunt in Montana and came to the U.S. He moved to Washington Heights in Manhattan in 1940 with his family. His father died there in 1942, never having fully recovered from his experiences on Kristallnacht and in Dachau.

He joined the U.S. Army in 1943 because as he says "I wanted to do my part for the country that saved my life" and was the first American soldier to set foot in Fuerth upon the liberation of the city in 1945.

After the war, Frank returned to the New York area and became a chef. For the past 38 years, he has been the Director of Food Services at the Norwalk, Connecticut Public School system.

Frank has been on the Blue Card Board for nearly 4 years and has organized eight reunions for Nuremberg/Fuerth survivors and their families.

He has been married to his beautiful wife, Beri, for 32 wonderful years. He is supported by and devoted to Beri, his son, Bobby, his daughter-in-law Marcy and his grandchildren Jessica and Evan.

Erica Teutsch

My involvement with The Blue Card goes back to the time when I was a teenager and my parents would paste their Blue Card stamps into their Blue Card Contribution book. I have been a member of the Blue Card since???

My parents, two younger sisters and I arrived in the United States from Germany in October 1938, moving almost immediately to Teaneck, New Jersey to be near close friends of the family. After graduation from Teaneck High School, I attended and graduated from Swarthmore College in 1943.

Most of my working life has been in government and public service. Since 1991 I have been the Senior Services Director at Goddard Riverside Community Center.

M. Ulrich

I was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1928, the younger of two girls. My father was in the banking and insurance business and my mother died of complications from blood poisoning when I was three. We had a comfortable life.

On November 9,1938 my father was arrested by the police and sent to Dachau. My sister and I were not allowed to attend school. My father was released from Dachau after 3 weeks and we were very lucky to arrive in New York in March 1939. The three of us moved into a one bedroom apartment in the Bronx.

My experience in the U.S. has been extremely fortunate. I attended Hunter College and later City College and worked in various jobs in schools. In 1960, I had the great fortune to marry Ernest Ulrich who emigrated from Munich in 1939 and ran an export business. We settled on Manhattan's Upper West side and raised two daughters. I have worked at a school since 1982 and am still employed there part time, as a transportation coordinator. My husband is a full time volunteer in the administration at Human Rights Watch.

The Blue Card Sincerely Thanks…

Leadership Circle

Lini Lipton
The Glickenhaus Foundation

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AMCEST Corporation
Nina Mogilnik

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Betti Weimersheimer
Barbara and Michael Lissner

The Blue Card is a non-profit organization that offers financial support to Holocaust survivors living below the poverty level in the United States. Established in 1934 in Germany, the Blue Card's sole purpose was to provide assistance to Jews plundered by the Nazis. The organization got its unusual name from the original blue identification cards that were issued to those it helped.

It ceased operations in the late 1930s. In 1940, The Blue Card was re-established in the United States to continue aiding refugees of Nazi persecution who resettled in America. Today it is the only organization in the U. S. whose sole mission is to aid Holocaust survivors in such a capacity.

Each year, The Blue Card helps about 1500 needy survivors, some of whom are still plagued by physical and emotional repercussions of the Holocaust. As you might imagine, many survivors are wary of lists, identification, government services, even hospital stays. The Blue Card can help. By keeping overhead to an absolute minimum, almost all donated money goes directly to elderly survivors to cover items such as medical care, ongoing treatment of mental health, utility bills, and small repairs.

There is scant time remaining to make these last years a little more comfortable for people who have suffered immeasurably--and it is so easy to do so. For example, last year we were able to buy air conditioners for members without them, and provide assistance with their subsequent electric bills. It can be that simple. Due to low overhead, CharityNavigator-America's Largest Charity Evaluator--continually bestows its top rating of 4-Stars upon the Blue Card. The Blue Card is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization. Among our Board of Directors are the children and grandchildren of the Blue Card's original founders.

To learn more about The Blue Card and to read full texts of our honorees stories, please visit our website at www.bluecardfund.org

End of [Kristallnacht Commemoration :